

Southwest Area Engine Operator's Meeting  
February 12, 2003 - Phoenix Area

Minutes form the third meeting:

The meeting was called to order at 0807 on Wednesday, 2/12/03 at the Best Western Grace Inn in Ahwatukee, AZ. Twenty-four people from around the Southwest Area met for the "spring meeting". Todd Rhines began the meeting with an update on the upgrades for the type 3 captain to the GS-8 level. Todd also touched on the rumor of 65% MEL and how it was just a rumor. Todd talked of the minimum standard/qualifications for all of the positions in the fire world in Region 1 that was looked into by a regional working group on the upgrades.

Todd then went into the agenda for the meeting that included a revisit with the charter and get it finalized and signed. The engine operators committee S.O.P. to be further discussed. To get input and issues from the Zone meetings in order, so they can be given to Bill Waterbury to present to SWACG. Before moving on to the other topic Todd told of the hotshot workshop that he attended and said there was a great deal of information presented. He would like to see the engine world "piggy back" the workshop to gain the info from the speakers and the have two or three days to discuss the issues from a engine perspective.

Burning issues from the zones include:

- Academy/Training - Zone level w/ Regional Standard - sending individuals to other regions to learn how to set up the academy - rural/local fire station cross-training
- More backing/support from the forest and district FMO's
- Work/Rest guidelines in general and how it affects I.A.
- Engine rotations with in the Zone
- Captain/Engineer vs. Forman/Asst. Forman
- Zone minutes to be shared (linked to the website)
- Contract Fire engines - Outsourcing of Fire - what are the standards - who signed them off
- "Sand Table" training
- Safety issues - NWCG says only need two personnel on a engine

Before the committee specified three burning issues to send to Bill Waterbury, we discussed contract engines and how the majority of them DO NOT compare to federal engines and their crews in our opinions. A lot of concerns arose with the use and usefulness of contract engines.

The three burning issues to be sent to Bill Waterbury for the presentation will include: (1) Support from the Forest FMO's (2) Engine academy at the Zone level with Regional standards (3) captain/engineer terminology to be a Regional standard. The other burning issues listed tend to be either at the national level (contract engines, competitive outsourcing and work/rest guidelines) or the local level (engine rotations out of Zone).

The committee created a working group to address issues involving the academy. Mike Tucker will be the lead, with Todd Lerke, Steve Wallace, Virgil Reynolds and Kc "Bucky" Yowell will make up the rest of the group. Any interest in being a part of the working group should be brought to the attention of [mike\\_tucker@fs.fed.us](mailto:mike_tucker@fs.fed.us) via e-mail. Visiting other academies, having product reps. present at the academy and having both beginning and advanced programs were among some of the ideas.

Before getting to the charter, Todd spoke of a "get together" they have on the Prescott N.F., where the fire managers, captain and engineers meet to discuss the upcoming fire season. In the past they have discussed available resources, equipment, radio frequencies and other shop talk issues. As we revisited the charter, the committee removed the names of representatives in the membership section, inserted an organizational chart and adjusted the approval portion to finalize the charter.

Todd Rhines announced he would sign off on the charter once the alterations were made. He then announced he would be retiring on March 31, 2003. With this known, after some discussion, the committee decided to leave Dave Bales and Keith Halloran in place and elect a new committee chair in the fall, during the next meeting. One candidate for the Chair position will come from each of the nine Zones. This will give the committee nine perspective candidates to vote for. He or she will become the new Engine Operator Committee Chairperson and serve for the next two years.

The committee was then presented with the S.O.P. from the working group with Art Gonzales as the representative. It was looked over by the committee and a copy was given to each of the Zone chairs. The chairs could then go back to their Zones and have a emergency meeting to make any revisions and send it back to Art with the changes/recommendations before Feb. 26, 2003. This S.O.P. is also to be sent off to the SWACG to be approved. Again, this is general S.O.P. and can be altered to fit to the District level.

The next SWAEOC meeting will be in Albuquerque, NM on November 6, 2003, with the location to be determined.

Submitted by:  
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SWAEOC Rec. Sec.